(b) whether the decision of Government is based on the recommendation of some Committee or group of experts; if so, the name of members of the Committee or group and the details of its recommendations; and

(c) the details of the customers to whom private sector pipelines would cater and whether they are aware of this policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Government had in April, 1996 approved for setting up petroleum product pipelines the formation of a Holding Company (Non-Govt.) with equity participation of 16% each by IOC, HPCL & BPCL and 2% by IBP. The balance 50% equity is to be offered to private companies, Financial institutions, etc. The pipeline Holding Company in the name 'Petronet India Limited' has since been incorporated on 26.05.1997 with its registered office at Mumbai.

(b) The above decision is based on the report of the Working Group consisting of General Managers of various oil companies, which has inter-alia suggested the formation of the Holding Company and subsidiary companies for implementation of product pipelines.

(c) According to the existing policy on Marketing of Petroleum Products only 4 Public Sector Oil Companies i.e. IOC, HPCL, BPCL and IBP are authorised to do the Marketing of major petroleum products in the country. However, parallel Marketing for L.P.G., S.K.O., LSHS has been allowed from February, 1993.

Fire accident at Vizag

398. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the damage caused to the Oil Refinery at Vizag, following the fire accident in September last;

(b) the reasons of the accident;

(c) whether the repair and restoration work of that Refinery has started; and

(d) if so, the date by which production is expected from that Refinery of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The fire accident in HPCL Vizag Refinery/Marketing Thermal on 14th September 1997, has caused damage to LPG spheres, storage tanks in LPG area refinery tanks farm and marketing Terminal, besides death of 60 persons and injuries to 10 persons.

(b) The accident is being investigated into by a Commission set up by Government on 11.10.97, which has been asked to submit its report to the Government within three months.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The Refinery is expected to be re-commissioned by January, 1998 subject to HPCL getting necessary approval from statutory authorities.

Oman's offer to sell LNG

399. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whethr Oman has offered to sell India a huge quantity of liquified natural gas (LNG) every year;

(b) if so, the quantity of gas offered and whether the terms are favourable; and

(c) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) At the Indo-Oman Joint Commission meeting held in October, 1997 the Oman Government has made a general offer to supply LNG to India but the details were not specified.